MUSSORGSKY: PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION

HERSCH: TCHAIKOVSKY VARIATIONS

NATASHA PAREMSKI

PIANO

Perhaps one of the most famous and often-performed works - both symphonically thanks to Ravel's orchestration, and because it is a favorite of pianists - is Pictures at an Exhibition, composed in 1874. Inspired by the sketches of Mussorgsky's friend Victor Hartmann, the concept is a journey through a museum. Every Promenade - the walk to and from the "Pictures" - shares the same melody, but vastly differs in mood. Of all the "Pictures" the most interesting interpretively to me is perhaps "Bydlo", due to the double meaning of the word. Bydlo means cattle, yes, and is represented as such in the sketch, but is also and most commonly used in reference to a horde of people who have lost their humanity, soul, individuality. When I consider the Promenade that follows - I sense a disappointed tone, and am therefore inclined to wonder if Mussorgsky at the very least considered the latter meaning. I suspect everyone will recognize "Baba Yaga" - a frightful witch permeating much of Slavic mythology. She lives deep in the forest in a cabin on chicken legs surrounded by a fence of human bones and skulls. She is a demon, but is quite often a protagonist. For a price, she is a willing conduit to the world of the dead, and as such my favorite capitalist. She takes off in her mortar and we follow her flight to the Great Bogatyr Gates. Hartmann's sketch of these gates was actually a submission to an architectural competition to build gates in honor of Emperor Alexander II's survival of a failed assassination attempt. Hartmann chose the style of Old Kievan Rus'.

This is a journey through ancient and mythic Russia, with a nod to the Franco-Russian love affair. A work I have lived with the majority of my musical life, it never fails to surprise me in its scope, harmonic modernism, and classic Russian grandeur.

It was Charlie Hamlen who introduced me to Fred Hersch's music and the great jazz pianist himself in 2005. At Charlie's suggestion, I learned and subsequently recorded Fred's Three Character Studies. I immediately fell in love with the lyricism, humor, and colors of his musical language. After being awarded the Gilmore Young Artist Award in 2006, I did not hesitate to ask Fred if he would write a piece for me on behalf of the award's commission element. Happily, he agreed. Shortly thereafter, Fred endured and survived a very ominous period of ill health. Having emerged victorious, he was able to complete the Variations in 2013. Because of us both being Russian - myself by birth, and him by heritage - he decided to write a series of variations on one of Tchaikovsky's most famous melodies - the oboe solo from his Fourth Symphony. A true testament to the musical Renaissance man that Fred is, this is the perfect representation of the variety of texture, flavor, and melody that Fred is able to conjure - Ragtime, Chopin, Scarlatti, to name a few. In his effort to tap into my virtuosic reservoir, it is also quite the challenge pianistically!

I would like to dedicate this album to the memory of a dear friend and mentor, Charlie Hamlen. To you I am forever grateful, and you will always be my guiding light.

— Natasha Paremski

NATASHA PAREMSKI

With her consistently striking and dynamic performances, pianist Natasha Paremski reveals astounding virtuosity and voracious interpretive abilities. She continues to generate excitement from all corners as she wins over audiences with her musical sensibility and powerful, flawless technique.

Natasha is a regular return guest of many major orchestras, including the Colorado Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Chicago's Grant Park Festival, Winnipeg Symphony, Oregon Symphony, and Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. She has performed with major orchestras in North America including the Dallas Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Diego Symphony, Toronto Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, Houston Symphony, NAC Orchestra, and Nashville Symphony. She has toured extensively in Europe with such orchestras as the Bournemouth Symphony, Vienna's Tonkünstler Orchester, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Orchestre de Bretagne,

L'Orchestre de Nancy, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Tonhalle Orchester in Zurich, Moscow Philharmonic, and Bergen Philharmonic under the direction of conductors including Thomas Dausgaard, Peter Oundjian, Andres Orozco-Estrada, Jeffrey Kahane, JoAnn Falletta, Rossen Milanov, and Andrew Litton. In addition, she has toured with Gidon Kremer and the Kremerata Baltica.

She has given recitals at the Auditorium du Louvre in Paris, Wigmore Hall, Schloss Elmau, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Festival, Verbier Festival, Seattle's Meany Hall, Kansas City's Harriman Jewell Series, Teatro Colon, Tokyo's Musashino Performing Arts Center and the Gilmore and Ravinia Festivals.

A passionate chamber musician, Natasha has been a guest of many festivals such as The Green Music Center ChamberFest, and the Lockenhaus, Toronto, and Cape Cod Chamber Music festivals to name a few.

Natasha continues to extend her performance activity and range beyond the traditional concert hall. She was featured in a major two-part documentary on the life of Tchaikovsky for BBC. In 2007, Natasha participated in the filming of Twin Spirits, a project starring Sting and Trudie Styler directed by John Caird, the original director/adaptor of the musical Les Misérables.

Natasha began her piano studies at the age of four with Nina Malikova at Moscow's Andreyev School of Music. She then studied at the San Francisco Conservatory, and subsequently with Earl Wild, before moving to New York to study with Pavlina Dokovska at Mannes College.

Natasha made her professional debut at age nine with El Camino Youth Symphony in California. At the age of fifteen she debuted with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and recorded two albums with the Moscow Philharmonic. Her first recital album, released in 2011, debuted at number nine on the Billboard Chart, and was subsequently rereleased on the Steinway label. In 2012 she recorded Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1 and Rachmaninov's Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Fabien Gabel. She has collaborated with Zuill Bailey on recordings of the Prokofiev and Britten Cello Sonatas. She has several recordings on Steinway's new Spirio technology.

Born in Moscow, Natasha moved to the United States at the age of eight becoming a U.S. citizen shortly thereafter, and is now based in New York.

MUSSORGSKY

Tracks 1–16 recorded August 23, 2017 at Olivier Hall,
Tippet Rise Arts Center in Fishtail, Montana.

Producer/Engineer: Monte Nickles
Assistant Engineer: Monica Bolles
Piano Technician: Mike Toia
Piano: Steinway Model D "Vera" (Hamburg)

HERSCH

Track 17 recorded June 13, 2016 at Steinway Hall, New York City.

Producer: Jon Feidner
Engineer: Lauren Sturm | Assistant Engineer: Melody Nieun Hwang
Editing: Kazumi Umeda
Production Assistant: Renée Oakford
Equipment: Pyramix using Merging Technologies Horus Converters;
mixed and mastered through Merging Technologies Horus Converter
Microphones: DPA 4006A, Schoeps MC6/MK2
Piano Technician: Lauren Sturm
Piano: Steinway Model D # 597590 (New York)

Executive Producer: Jon Feidner
Mixing and Mastering: Robert Friedrich
Art Direction: Jackie Fugere
Design: Cover to Cover Design, Anilda Carrasquillo
Photos of Natasha Paremski: Clarence Chan
Special Thanks to: Peter and Cathy Halstead, Tippet Rise Arts Center and The Secular Society.

MODEST MUSSORGSKY (1839-1881)

PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION

1 I. Promenade 1:28
2 II. The Gnome 2:39
3 III. Promenade 0:45
4 IV. The Old Castle 3:56
5 V. Promenade 0:26
6 VI. Tuileries 0:57
7 VII. Bydlo 3:16
8 VIII. Promenade 0:42
9 IX. Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks 1:12
10 X. Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuÿle 2:16
11 XI. Promenade 1:24
12 XII. Limoges -- The Market 1:16
13 XIII. Catacombs (Sepulchrum romanum) 1:55
14 XIV. Con mortuis in lingua mortua 1:43
15 XV. The Hut on Fowl's Legs (Baba Yaga) 3:11
16 XVI. The Great Bogatyr Gates 5:12

FRED HERSCH (B. 1955)

17 Variations on a Theme by Tchaikovsky 18:34

Total Timing: 51:01

NATASHA PAREMSKI, PIANO

Steinway & Sons
℗© 2019 Steinway, Inc.
Steinway and the Lyre are registered trademarks.
All rights reserved. Made in the USA.